

OUTDOORSUPDATE

OF THE OUTDOORS:

It's 'Knot' Funny When Losing Fish

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

If you've spent much time on the water, it's happened to you at least once, or maybe even a dozen times.

You've hooked into what you believe to be a good fish and it's peeling off yard after yard of line. You're thinking, "I hope the line doesn't break!"

Just about the time you think you have everything under control, your line goes limp and the fish — a state record in your mind — swims off with you lure.

If you're like me, you jump up and down, holler and you use several of those "descriptive" adjectives your mother told you not to use as a kid.

"Damn line, broke again" — that's where everyone places the blame!

As you reel in, you notice that the line's corkscrewed, the end of it looking similar to a pigtail.

Well, that's a good indicator that it wasn't a line break, your knot has either slipped or burned through.

Poorly-tied knots are the main reason people lose fish, others are that they tried to drag the fish in, not allowing the drag on the reel to work properly or they hadn't allowed their rod to do its job, and not fighting the fish until it was tired.

In this article we'll talk about knots. I know, everyone knows how to tie knots right, because we learned as kids when we learned how to tie our shoes.

There are several knots out there that really work well and the old overhand knot you tied as a kid is not one of them.

When you tie a knot, you're taking away from the strength of the line, actually reducing its strength.

So you want to tie the best knot you can, and this means either the clinch knot for monofilament line or the palomar knot for braided line.

The improved clinch is really easy to tie.

Run the line once or twice through the eye of your hook or lure (once for a clinch knot and twice for the improved clinch knot), then wrap the line five to eight times around the line back towards the hook or lure.

Once you've wrapped the line, slide the loose end of the line through your initial loop.

Then comes the really important part.

You'll then need to wet the line and tighten the knot with a steady even motion, without hesitation.

If you don't wet the line, the friction



Mikee Howey, formerly of Hartington, Neb., caught this bass on Chalkroch Lake in Northeast Nebraska earlier this summer.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

created by sliding the monofilament against itself will burn or fray the line, reducing the strength of the line even more.

Try to keep your line as straight as possible because every time you cross the line over itself, there's a chance of breakage.

The clinch knot will give you a knot that is somewhere around 60 or 65 percent line strength. In other words, if you have 10-pound line and tie a good clinch knot, your line might break at 6 or 6.5 pounds.

Which is really no problem, as you can land some really big fish on light line as long as you have a good knot, use your rod correctly, have your drag set properly and you don't try to "horse" the fish in.

If you're using a braided line such as Fireline, Spiderwire or any of the other super lines, you're going to want to use a palomar knot.

With this knot, you double your line before you put it through the eye of the hook or lure, then you tie and overhand knot, with the loop that is left over, run it around the hook or lure and pull it tight.

How To Tie A Cinch And Palomar Knot

Clinch Knot

1. An old standby for fishermen. Pass the line through the eye of hook, swivel or lure. Double back and make five turns around the standing line.

Hold the coils in place; thread end of line through the first loop above the eye, then through the big loop as shown.

2. Hold the tag end and standing line while coils are pulled up. Take care that coils are in spiral, not lapping over each other. Slide tight against the eye. Clip tag end.

Palomar Knot

The palomar knot is easy to tie correctly, and consistently the strongest knot known to hold terminal tackle.

1. Double about 4 inches of line and pass the loop through the eye of fishing hook.

2. Let the fishing hook hang loose, and tie an overhand knot in the doubled line.

Avoid twisting the lines and do not tighten the knot.

3. Pull the loop end of the line far enough to pass it over the hook, swivel or lure.

Make sure the loop passes completely over the attachment.

4. Pull both the tag end and the standing line until the knot is tightened. Clip off the tag end of the fishing line.

Wetting the knot isn't as important as it is with monofilament line because braided line is tougher than nails.

The palomar knot is a 90 percent line strength knot so it is the best knot no matter what line you use, just remember when using monofilament line moisten it before you pull the knot tight.

Knots may not seem like a big deal, but if you tie a poor one, the best rod, reel and fishing knowledge won't do you much good because a good knot is all that truly connects you to that fish of a lifetime.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is the producer/host of the award winning *Outdoorsmen Adventures* locally it can be seen on KTTM/KTTW-TV, Sioux Falls/Huron, SD (Fox) 7:00 a.m. Sunday and on KPTH-TV, (Fox) Sioux City, IA, at 7:30 a.m. Sundays. For more information on the outdoors, check out www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

Four Plead Guilty To Game Violations In Dawes County

LINCOLN, Neb. — Four members of a Dawes County family recently pleaded guilty to numerous hunting violations that occurred in October 2009.

Dawes County Court records indicate that Adam J. Debock, 21, of Chadron; Clarissa Williams-Debock, 19, of Chadron; Scott E. Debock, 32, of Rapid City; and Robert Debock, 59, of Crawford, were convicted of 28 counts of various hunting violations associated with three incidents. Their combined liquidated damages, fines and court costs totaled \$6,542.

Conservation officers Dan Kling and Heath Packett began an investigation after a deer was discovered to have been shot and left in a field in a remote area of Dawes County. Investigation of the scene and surveillance of the area over a period of several days led to the identification and contact with the subjects.

During the investigation, officers seized a mule deer buck, whitetail buck, spotlight, compound bow, .22 caliber revolver, GPS unit, .22 caliber rifle, and a .270 caliber rifle. Both deer were shot with rifles during the archery season.

According to Kling, the subjects admitted to "driving the country trying to kill a big mule deer, by any means, regardless of what laws they broke."

Adam Debock pleaded guilty to hunting in closed season, hunting without permission, hunting from roadway, hunting with artificial light, wanton waste, no deer permit, no habitat stamp, accessory to hunt in closed season, and accessory to hunt without permission. Clarissa Williams-Debock pleaded guilty to hunting with artificial light and four counts of accessory to game violation. Scott Debock pleaded guilty to hunting in closed season, hunting from roadway, hunting without permission, failure to tag deer, hunting with artificial light, and four counts of accessory to game violation. Robert Debock pleaded guilty to three counts of accessory to game violation.

Anyone with knowledge of similar incidents should report them to their nearest conservation officer or call Nebraska Wildlife Crimestoppers at (800) 742-7627.

In Right Conditions, Topwater Lures Are Best

BY RAY SASSER

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DALLAS — Here's a novice bass angler describing his first large-mouth bass on a topwater lure. His eyes were as big as a child's eyes on Christmas morning. In animated fashion, he talked about the startling and ferocious surface explosion and ensuing battle.

"The strike was so exciting," he said. "Why would anyone fish with a lure other than a topwater?"

Sadly, fishing experience will answer that question. Most of the time, topwater lures are not effective and anglers must rely on subsurface offerings. If topwater worked all the time, there would be no bass fishing lures other than topwater.

I've never met an angler who wasn't hooked on surface action. In Mexico, the guides often use a charming Spanglish word — top-ee-water — to coach their clients on what lure to try. It's a recommendation most often heard during warm months, mostly at dawn and dusk, when light conditions are low and fish are attracted by a surface commotion.

Cloudy conditions extend the length of time topwater lures are effective, as will a windy chop that breaks up sunlight penetrating the depths. Most topwater fanatics prefer very calm conditions when fish can home in on their lure from 10 feet or more. Wave action makes the lure more difficult to locate, but bass will bite topwater in windy conditions.

There's a reason for this. Largemouth bass are equal-opportunity predators. They'll eat anything they can choke down and are sometimes found struggling on the surface, their throats lodged by prey too big to swallow. It's the classic case of biting off more than you can chew.

Like trout in a stream, bass in a lake will feed on surface insects as appetizers and, as an entree, eat the smaller fish also attracted by insects. They'll feed on ducklings or other birds that fall into the water, along with snakes, turtles, rats, mice, young muskrats or other small mammals.

A sick or injured prey fish often flounders weakly on the surface, advertising its vulnerability as sure-



RAY SASSER/DALLAS MORNING NEWS/MCT

Multiple treble hooks make topwater lures dangerous to remove from fish. Use a Boga Grip or other fish-handle device to control the fish, then use pliers or forceps to remove the hook.

ly as a three-legged zebra on the Serengeti Plain. Every predator is interested in an easy meal, and bass are no different.

All productive lures generate a form of adrenaline rush. The thrill is in the "thump" of a bass biting a plastic worm, the sideways jump of the line when a fish takes a jig, the bone-jarring collision when a big-mouth swimming north front-ends a crankbait headed south.

None of those thrills remotely equals the surface explosion that is a siren song for so many anglers, tempting them to tie on a topwater, even if they don't believe it will work. Like many television viewers, I sit mesmerized by slow-motion video of great white sharks striking seals, the ferocity of the attack often knocking the 400-pound mammals out of the water.

Unlike most viewers, I never

watch Air Jaws video without thinking that those frightening shark attacks are just a bigger version of a bass biting a topwater lure. The following is topwater lore gleaned from accomplished anglers and 50 years of personal experience:

Chugger. This is a style known for its concave head, which creates a splashy disturbance when retrieved with short chugs or twitches of a fishing rod. The Heddon Lucky 13 is a prototype that popularized chuggers. One of today's most popular chuggers is the Rebel Pop-R. Strike King's Spit N King and Storm's Chug Bug are other good examples.

Prop bait. These are cigar-shaped floaters with propellers either on both ends or just on the rear of the lure. When retrieved, the prop makes a surface commotion and a sound that imitates a school of baitfish skittering for cover. Classic models include the Smithwick Devil's Horse and Heddon Torpedo.

Walking bait. This is a cigar-shaped lure balanced so it moves from side-to-side when retrieved with the right cadence and rod action. The action is called "walking the dog."

Heddon's Zara Spook is the best-known walking bait. Frog baits. Floaters, like the Scum Frog and Snag Proof Frog, have been around for a long time and are designed to fish slowly through lily pads or weedy cover. The newest generation of frog baits are the fast-moving type with turbulent leg action. They are reeled quickly across the surface, often resulting in dramatic strikes. Examples include Zoom's Horny Toad, Stanley's Ribbet Frog and Strike King's Rage Toad.

Buzzbaits. These are modified spinnerbaits with specialized blades that keep the lure buzzing across the surface, kicking up a sputtering commotion and mixing in a clacking sound for good measure. Most lure companies that make spinnerbaits also have a buzzbait in their line.

Wildlife Crimestoppers at (800) 742-7627.

OUTDOOR REPORT

Outdoor Campus Invites Women To Try Something New

SIoux FALLS — The Outdoor Campus in Sioux Falls will host its annual Women's Try It Day from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. CDT on Saturday, July 17.

The open-house event offers women of all ages a variety of outdoor activities, including such things as archery, paddling, geocaching, BB-gun shooting and outdoor cooking.

"It's a special day for women who are eager to sample different outdoor activities," said Alison Eden, The Outdoor Campus volunteer coordinator.

Located at 4500 South Oxbow Ave. in Sertoma Park, Women's Try It Day is free, and pre-registration is not required. For more information about the event, e-mail TOC@state.sd.us or visit www.outdoorcampus.org.

Oakwood Lakes To Host 32nd Annual Canoe, Kayak Tour

BRUCE — Grab a paddle and a partner and get ready for an afternoon of fun on the water at Oakwood Lakes State Park near Bruce, which is hosting its 32nd Annual Canoe and Kayak Tour on Sunday, July 18.

The event features a canoe/kayak Poker Run starting at 1:30 p.m. CDT. The event features teams collecting playing cards at various points along the route to get the best hand. At 3:30 p.m., paddlers can test their communication skills in the Blindfold Canoe Races. In the short race, one of the paddlers will be blindfolded while the other gives directions.

Participants should bring their own equipment. A limited number of canoes, kayaks, paddles and life jackets will be available for rent from the park.

Registration takes place prior to the races at 12:30 p.m. To participate in the day's events, there is a \$9 per person entry fee that will be used for prizes. A park entrance license is also required. Prizes and refreshments will follow the races at 4 p.m.

Oakwood Lakes State Park is located 10 miles northwest of Volga, off U.S. Highway 14. For more information on the Canoe and Kayak Tour, call the park office at 605-627-5441.

For a full schedule of special events in South Dakota state parks or to request a copy of one of the free canoe/kayak brochures, visit www.gfp.sd.gov or call 605-773-3391.

Rocky Point Rec Area Offers Summer Nature Camp For Kids

BELLE FOURCHE — Rocky Point Recreation Area near Belle Fourche will host a nature day camp for kids ages 7-12 on Wednesday, July 21.

The theme of the day camp is Nature Explorers. The day camp will run from 9:30 a.m. to noon MDT.

While the camp is geared for kids ages 7-12, younger children may attend if accompanied by adults. Kids should wear clothing appropriate for the weather, and also bring bug spray, drinking water and comfortable walking shoes. No snacks or refreshments will be provided, but kids are welcome to bring their own.

Rocky Point Recreation Area will also host Finding Your Way with GPS nature day camp on Aug. 14.

Reservations are required for the camps and can be made by calling Rocky Point Recreation Area at 605-641-0023 or by e-mail at RockyPoint@state.sd.us.

There is no fee for the camps, but a park entrance license is required.

Rocky Point Recreation Area is located 8 miles east of Belle Fourche, off Highway 212. For more information on the programming schedule throughout the summer season, visit South Dakota State Parks on the Web at www.gfp.sd.gov or call 605-773-3391.

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